

Quarterly

LOS ANGELES
COUNTY MUSEUM
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LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM

EXPOSITION PARK • LOS ANGELES 7, CALIFORNIA

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NEWS OF THE MUSEUM

CHAMBER MUSIC BROADCASTS . . .

Sunday afternoons from 3:00-3:30, Station KFAC continues to broadcast the Museum's weekly series of Chamber Music Concerts. The Winter and Spring series follow from January 8th through May 21st.

TELEVISION . . .

The Museum's weekly television programs, "Meet the World with your Los Angeles County Museum" (from 3:40-4:00 on Tuesdays, over KFI-TV), have received an award from the Southern California Association for Better Radio and Television, as the best educational program of 1949.

HEARST GIFTS . . .

As previously, the Museum received throughout the past calendar year many important gifts of works of art through the great generosity of William Randolph Hearst. The next issue of the *Bulletin of the Art Division* will contain a checklist of the most noteworthy pieces dating from Mediaeval times to the 19th Century. Another issue will be devoted to art works antedating the Middle Ages.

HALL OF EVOLVING LIFE . . .

The scope of Science Division plans for this great project is outlined in the present issue of the *Quarterly*. The collecting of material is well under way, toward the central ecological group (under chairmanship of Kenneth Stager, Curator of Mammalogy and Ornithology) and the Adaptations Bay (under Dr. Hildegard Howard, Curator of Avian Paleontology). Staff members have made several field-trips to the desert.

NEW MUSEUM BOOKSHOP . . .

In the 1949 calendar year, gross business of the Museum Bookshop amounted to over \$14,000 under the care of only a one-man staff. Final working drawings for a modernized and much

improved Bookshop have been approved by the Board of Governors' Building Committee. Materials are being purchased with the \$3,000 provided by two anonymous donors, and work by Museum carpenters and technicians will soon begin. With larger and vastly better facilities for display and storage, and it is hoped with the volunteer assistance of members of the Los Angeles Junior League, the successful expansion of services offered by the Bookshop appears assured.

MUSEUM FACADE . . .

The appointment of Sumner Spaulding as supervising architect for the completion of the central portion of the Museum's long unfinished facade, which was recommended by the Board of Governors, has been approved by the Board of Supervisors. After final approval of plans and specifications, work will proceed during the present fiscal year, using the \$25,000 appropriated for this purpose.

MUSEUM GUARDS . . .

As promised in the last issue of the *Quarterly*, the Museum guards have now appeared in dark blue uniforms and with deputy sheriff badges. The change has facilitated their duties.

STAFF CAFETERIA . . .

For two decades, the area planned for a Museum Cafeteria has been used as storage space. But since the first of this year Mr. Frank Peterson (a nearby restaurateur has been serving lunches to Staff members, on five week-days. The generosity of two anonymous donors, each contributing \$400 to Museum Associates for the purpose, made possible the remodeling and redecorating of the room, and the providing of tables and benches which were built by the Museum carpenters. The need was long felt, and the operation of this new facility is being conducted to the great satisfaction of Staff members.

—J. H. B., JR.

REMINISCENCES ON THE LIFE OF ALBURTIS DEL ORIENT BROWERE

FOREWORD

USUALLY it is rather difficult to obtain firsthand glimpses into the lives of the lesser known artists, particularly those who flourished a generation or so ago. Represented in the California Centennials Exhibition of Art which was held in the Los Angeles County Museum last year (September 30th through November 13th), were a number of minor artists who found inspiration in the gold rush towns and cities, the mines, or the scenic grandeurs of the new state. Among these men whose lives have now become obscured by passing years and the heedlessness of oncoming generations was Alburtis del Orient Browere. His canvas "Stockton in 1856," lent by the M. H. de Young Memorial Museum, San Francisco, attracted much favorable interest. But at the time of the exhibition little was known of the artist himself, aside from a few facts gleaned from meagre biographical references.

It was known that Browere was born at Tarrytown, New York, March 17th, 1814, and that he was a self-taught artist. One account stated that Browere's father had gained transitory fame by making life casts of prominent men. But young Browere did not follow in his sculptor-father's footsteps. To eke out a rather uncertain livelihood as an artist, young Browere turned to sign painting. In 1852 he went to California, where he painted life as he found it. He returned to New York but in 1856 was once more in California, where he painted the view of Stockton, now deemed one of the best pictures of that young and growing city.

A visitor to the exhibition, Mr. Roscoe P. Conkling of Inglewood, California, a retired mining engineer and author of an important historical work, "The Butterfield Overland Mail," saw

Browere's painting and the name struck a responsive chord in his memory.

The Museum is grateful to Mr. Conkling for providing the following reminiscences of the artist Browere and his contemporaries of the 19th century.

—(ARTHUR WOODWARD)

ALBURTIS DEL ORIENT BROWERE

The name Browere, a landscape painter, sent my thoughts back over the years to a period in my life sixty-five or more years ago, when one Alburtis D. O. Browere, a long-time resident of the village of Catskill, New York, was well known as an artist throughout the region. Although one of my uncles married the daughter of Alburtis Browere, I know little of his early history. It was said that the family, like many of the early settlers along the west bank of the Hudson, was of Dutch descent. The name was frequently spelled without the last "e" and some of the painter's pictures were signed "A. D. O. Brower."

The Browere home was a comfortable frame dwelling standing on the north side of the Catskill or Palenville turnpike, a mile or so west of the village. The property comprised an acre or so. There was a barn down the road, and back of this was the painter's studio, a rough frame building, standing on the edge of a little orchard and protecting the apricot trees from the rigorous north wind.

Mr. Browere had made a trip to California during the 1850s but I know little more of this journey than what I was told as a boy. The artist brought back cuttings of apricots on this trip, and the trees flourished and bore fruit, the first apricots the village folk had ever seen or tasted. It was quite an event in our young lives



ALBURTO DEL ORIENT BROWERE . . . *Stockton in 1856*
(M. H. de Young Memorial Museum, San Francisco)

to go up to Grandpa Browere's orchard when the apricots were ripe; but he was pretty close with the fruit and would give us only a few that had dropped from the trees, or those that the birds had half devoured.

Mr. Browere was of medium height and rather heavily built. He had a round Dutch face with clear, friendly blue eyes behind thick-rimmed glasses. His hair was quite long and nearly white in my time, as was his short bristling mustache. Altogether he was a very imposing looking man, who impressed you with his strong personality. He was a familiar figure, especially on those lovely fall days when he appeared in his old flat-bottomed skiff, made fast along the flaming banks of Ramshorn or Du Boise's creek, or working in the shade of his umbrella up on the Kalajbarje where the Catskills, bathed in a glowing mist "luminous and serene," seemed to stand up close to your very eyes.

Though I was only eleven when he died, nearing his seventy-fourth year, I can well recall him

because I had been trying to paint pictures as far back as I could remember, and he was always kind and indulgent, letting me look at his sketches in his big portfolio and making me feel quite puffed-up as he explained them. He also showed me how to mix simple colors. This made a great impression, for to me he was a great artist. His simplicity touched another chord—he had so little, but he made the most of it. His big white umbrella he had made himself. It had heavy whalebone ribs, and the pole he had worked out from one of his own pear trees. His easel, palette and paint box, along with his brushes and a stout three-legged stool, were also the products of his capable hands.

It was always a privilege for me to be allowed to go with him on his sketching trips. Of course he always let me carry the umbrella and other impedimenta, and unlike the boys of today, I never thought of asking to be paid for this work. I considered it an honor to be seen with such a great man.

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There were other times when I tagged along behind many of the visiting artists when they went along the river shore to sketch or paint. I hung around and asked many questions which were probably very annoying to them.

My ire would sometimes be aroused when I compared the equipment possessed by these visitors with that owned by old Mr. Browere. They had their green-lined umbrellas with adjustable poles with brass thumb-screws and brass spikes to thrust into the ground. Their easels of varnished hardwood, paintboxes with row upon row of paint tubes, enough, it seemed to my boyish imagination, to paint a barn, besides their frames of newly prepared canvas, all giving out an aura of fame and fortune, not at all pleasing to me when I thought of Mr. Browere's unrewarded efforts. Some of them had a most unkindly manner and they growled unpleasantly at me if I ventured a question. Not all were of this calibre, but there were enough such to arouse something of the primitive in me. I regarded them as poachers invading Mr. Browere's preserves. I had militant notions of revenge, and planned how I would sometime drop a nest of yellow jackets down upon the tops of some of the umbrellas to drive them from the river shore!

It was said that Browere was self-taught, which was probably true, and he no doubt realized as much as his critics that his work lacked something, for he never laid claim to being other than a lover of nature. Criticism and comparison were far more practised at that time than now, and he suffered more than any realized, in his quiet, modest way, when his pictures were so scathingly criticised. I recall hearing one of these famous artists who, looking at one of Browere's new pictures which was signed with his initials A. D. O. B., sneeringly remarked: "Well, well, I see we have a new daub, and A. D. O. B. it is."

He had to suffer comparison with Thomas

Cole, Frederick Church, George Inness, Durand, Bierstadt and others. Catskill was the home of Thomas Cole, and although he was dead, his influence still prevailed. Frederick Church lived just across the river; he had been a pupil of Cole. Inness and other famous painters would visit the region in the fall season and spend considerable time there with their canvases. From all I can recall, or from what I learned subsequently, Browere was ignored by all these and he suffered, as many another prophet has been compelled to do, in his own community. Fortunately, he had enough Dutch sturdiness in his nature to let these unpleasant darts glance off.

The reference to Browere as "Just a good sign painter" was founded on fact. In order to make a decent living he had been connected with the Dunham & Breasted paint shop for many years, and in this profession *he was a master*. How many times I recall climbing up to the old paint loft after school or on a Saturday and watching Mr. Browere and "Billy" Breasted at work on one of the large signs, some of which were sent to New York. How skillfully they laid the gold leaf on the huge letters, then they shellacked the spaces between, over which they carefully sifted the blue and fine black sand and painstakingly lined the edges of the letters with a small tool where the gold leaf met the sand. Fine skill indeed! Mr. Browere would take a long-haired brush, dip it in the color, and make the most beautifully formed letters with all the sweep and grace of a Spencerian pen expert. Sometimes, as a favor to the boys who were hanging around the shop, he would draw the most wonderful spread eagles, or he would sketch the dome of the capitol at Washington with a halo over it. It was the day of craftsmanship, when men could do things with their hands and didn't have to depend too much on machines and mechanical methods.

There were many of Browere's pictures hanging in our village homes. We had two in my own home, one a landscape showing old Catskill Point in the '40s, interesting to us because it showed the hill on the east bank of the river in its virgin state before Frederick Church built his magnificent home there. The other painting was a portrait of my grandfather, at which I well recall watching Browere at work while my grandfather sat for it. As a portrait painter his work was inferior, though slightly above the average of the itinerant portrait painter of the day.

These hung in our home for years but at present I am uncertain of their whereabouts. Another of his paintings which I remember well, because of the subject, was the "Ride of Tam O'Shanter."

Mr. George Breasted, born in 1811, was a lifelong friend of Mr. Browere who was born in 1814. I recall vividly trudging over the old turnpike one cold, bleak November day in company with old Mr. Breasted whom I had been helping all day, digging fossils in one of the limestone quarries, a pleasant and enlightening task in which I had indulged, under his stern and exacting tutelage, for as long as I could remember.

As we neared the Browere place, the smoke rising from the chimney was a cheerful sight and Mr. Breasted suggested that we stop in and get warm, as we had done on other occasions. The sight of old George Breasted, with me trailing along behind him, loaded down with specimens of some sort, had long ceased to attract the attention of anyone in the community. He was usually attired in a long, black broadcloth frock coat, a white shirt with a high stiff collar and a black neck-cloth. An enormous, high-crowned black beaver hat sat upon his thatch of shaggy gray hair (his entire ensemble consisted of relics of his late brother John's extensive wardrobe) and old George was regarded as just another one of the eccentric characters seen in the neighborhood.

We went along the path to the studio which

Mr. Breasted always referred to as Browere's "paint shop," which even then seemed very undignified to me. Mr. Breasted never knocked at doors, he just opened them and stalked in as he did on this occasion, with no other announcement of his coming. Nor did he ever remove his big beaver hat until he was ready to extract the specimens stored in its high crown. On that day it contained a mass of leaves which served as a storage place for some half frozen bats, and a few bugs and huge green worms which he was taking home to preserve in alcohol.

It was growing late and Mr. Browere was getting ready to go home, but he welcomed us in his usual way. Mr. Breasted just mumbled something about the cold and an early winter, and went to the stove to warm his hands. These two old men had known each other for years, yet they met here this day not conscious that (as it proved) this was the last time they would ever see each other in this life. There was no more expression of anything like friendship, or affection, than if they were meeting for the first time. Mr. Breasted, like many others in the community, never regarded Browere as much of an artist, and his manner always expressed it. Mr. Browere may have been conscious of this feeling and couldn't always conceal it. Personally then, and long afterward, I tried to appease the unpleasant thought in my mind by attributing it to their heritage; for I could never understand the inherited stoicism of the Dutch, as I recall it—the manner in which they could meet and part without a word or sign to indicate that they had ever met before or wanted to meet again! So did those two old men act on that last day that they were ever to meet. It made such a deep and lasting impression on my young mind, that I can still remember it almost well enough to incorporate it in a picture.

There was just enough light from the dull November twilight sky falling through the large

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north window to show quite clearly the pitifully humble interior with its rude, home-made equipment. The glowing old woodstove was sending out its genial heat, making the place smell of burning spruce and pine. There were the two contrasting figures, Mr. Breasted looking tall and stern in his queer manner of dress, and Mr. Browere wearing an old, dilapidated greatcoat with a worn coon's skin hat on his head, and looking much thinner than I had ever seen him, standing near his old easel, cleaning his brushes.

We took our departure, the two old men as cold and formal as ever. I never saw Mr. Browere again except once when I went with my cousins to see him on his sickbed. He died a short time afterward and was buried in the old village cemetery.

It was some years later that I looked into his deserted studio, then falling to decay. It recalled the bitterness I used to feel when I compared his humble workshop with the almost luxurious studios of other artists in the region, filled with

fine equipment, with sketches on the walls made in Greece or Italy and furnished with furniture brought from those classic lands. Then I thought of old Mr. Browere working here in this dingy place, alone and without a word of praise or encouragement, not even expecting any, but loving with his last breath the river, the creeks, the hills and the mountains of his own homeland in all their virgin loveliness. He saw them as we never shall, and he tried to preserve their beauty to the best of his talent, limited as this was, without thought of compensation or dreams of future recognition. A lonely, misunderstood and unappreciated soul! I liked to think of him there, dreaming things, and seeing with his kindly blue eyes things which his skill failed to convey to canvas. He suffered the same frustration and defeat that every creative mind has suffered and always will, yet in the end he found a great joy in his heart and recompense to his soul.

—ROSCOE P. CONKLING

THE HALL OF EVOLVING LIFE

THE MAJOR PROJECT on the Science Division's calendar this year is the development of the Hall of Evolving Life, which will replace the Osteology Hall as the main gallery in the northeast wing of the Museum. The plan involves structural revision of the gallery, to create a series of built-in embayments along both sides of the hall and following across the north end.

Accomplishment of the entire plan is seen as a four-year project. Construction of the embayments, begun last year, is already well under way, and the sections on Ecology of the Desert (floor plan, *F*) and Adaptation (*G*) are in preparation.

Beginning with an interpretation of the characteristics of living substance, the first unit (*A*) will demonstrate the differences between living and non-living matter. It will show the composi-

tion of protoplasm and the essential components of a cell, together with models of some of the simplest known plants and animals which carry on all the functions of life within a single cell.

From this portrayal of the fundamentals of life, the exhibit will proceed to an exposition of the basis of heredity (*B*)—the means whereby ancestral characters are handed on, and the way in which new characters appear. In logical sequence, the third unit (*C*) will embrace the subject of development of the individual, beginning with the union of germ cells bearing the hereditary characters. By means of charts and models, it is planned to show the process of cell division, and the formation of the embryo in one or two of the lower back-boned animals, as well as in man.

A continuation of the comparison of man with the other vertebrates carries into unit *D*, where anatomical models and skeletons will depict similarities and differences in various groups.

The next four sections will be concerned with several aspects of the complex relationships of living forms to their physical environment and to each other. Unit *E* will demonstrate the separate functions of plants and animals in the world of life. Across the north end of the hall, a diorama "Ecology of the Desert" (*F*) will portray in a natural setting a typical association of animals, plants and terrain, indicating the inter-relationships of the living forms, and the ways in which they are adapted to their mode of life. The desert has been selected as the locale for this group since it presents some of the most interesting adjustments of animals and plants to a rigorous environment. Unit *G* ("Adaptation") will show in more detail how the anatomy of animals is fitted to particular life habits. Unit *H* will illustrate the factors governing the geographic distribution of animals and plants.

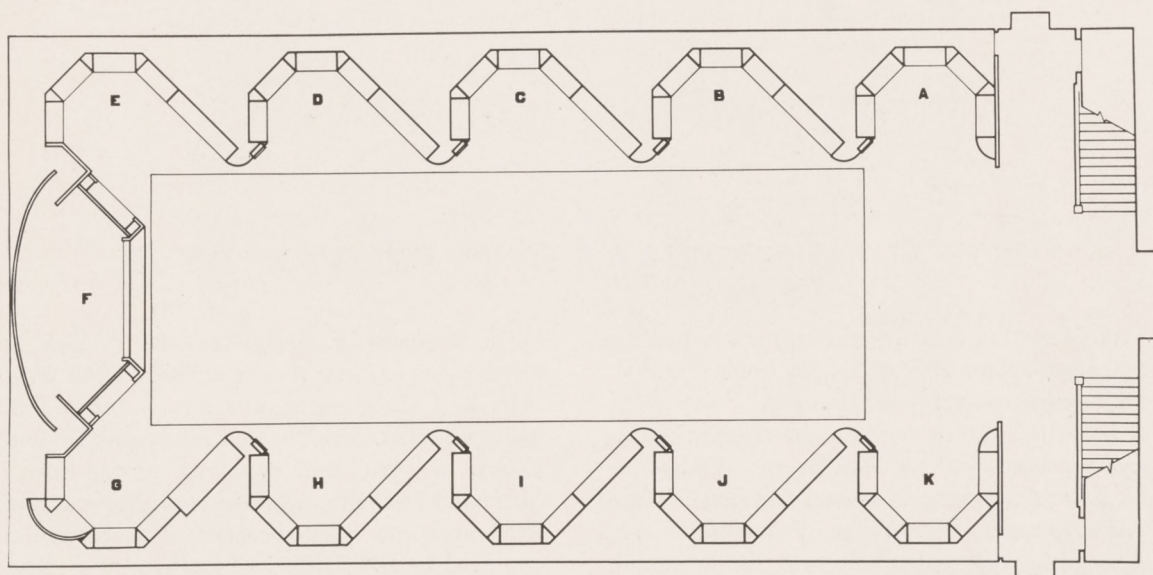
The subject of classification (unit *I*) and how

it reflects relationship—to the point of suggesting actual genealogy—will be portrayed by specimens which demonstrate the characters used in classification, and by two illustrated charts representing "family trees" of the plant and animal kingdoms.

How the progressive stages in life forms suggested by classification of living organisms are reflected in the fossil record of life of the past, forms the subject matter of the next-to-last section (*J*). The final unit (*K*) will illustrate the state of present knowledge concerning the ancestry of man.

It is anticipated that the basic structure of the hall, and the installation of units *F* and *G*, will be completed later this year, at which time the hall can be opened to the public. Thereafter, work on the additional sections will be carried along individually, until the entire hall is completed. Since the first three units will require the preparation of rather intricate models, their completion will actually be the last step in the project, effected presumably in 1953.

—HILDEGARDE HOWARD



FLOOR PLAN, THE HALL OF EVOLVING LIFE . . . Sequence of embayments, reading counter-clockwise: A, Fundamentals of Life; B, Mechanism of Heredity; C, Embryology; D, Comparative Anatomy; E, Plants vs. Animals; F, Ecology of the Desert; G, Adaptation; H, Geographic Distribution; I, Classification; J, The Fossil Record; K, Ancestry of Man.



ANTON VAN DYCK (1599-1641) . . . *Rinaldo and Armida*. About 1627
Gift of the Hearst Corporation, 1949

“RINALDO AND ARMIDA” BY VAN DYCK

THE MUSEUM, which owned thus far two excellent examples of Van Dyck's English period, has recently come into possession of a masterpiece of the artist's Italian period, representing *Rinaldo and Armida*.^{*} The painting, never published before, turned up recently at a sale at Christie's and was acquired by Mr. William Randolph Hearst, who generously presented it to the Museum. Formerly in the collection of the Earl Fitzwilliam, it has been exhibited only once, at the

Royal Academy in London in 1900. A drawing for the composition, mentioned by Lionel Cust as in the J. C. Robinson collection, but since lost, had been rediscovered by A. E. Popham (Deputy Keeper of prints and drawings in the British Museum) in the Fairfax Murray collection, and although it has again disappeared, it can be reproduced here through Mr. Popham's kindness.

The subject of our painting, an episode from Torquato Tasso's epic poem *Jerusalem Delivered*, is well known in this country from Van Dyck's great painting in the museum at Baltimore, be-

^{*}A.5933.49-1, gift of the Hearst Corporation. Canvas 56 x 79 inches.

queathed by Jacob Epstein and formerly in the possession of the Duke of Newcastle. It was this painting which had been ordered for the King by Endymion Porter in 1629. Van Dyck was then still in the Netherlands; and it was partly due to the success of this painting that the artist received an invitation to settle in England as court painter to Charles I.

Van Dyck obviously had no trouble in complying with the order, as he had painted the subject before. He must have become acquainted with Tasso's poem in Italy and, as he knew the language, read it (as Goethe did later) in the original.

Torquato Tasso's poem was a favorite with the literary world in England. Even during Tasso's lifetime a fragmentary translation by Richard Carew appeared (1594), but the poem really

poetry," and Charles I "cheered his imprisonment with the poem."

The subject of Rinaldo and Armida, told in the XIV, XV and XVIth books of Tasso's poems, must have appealed to the Elizabethan taste for fantastic and glowingly sensuous narrative, as evidenced so successfully in the young Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* and the *Rape of Lucrece*, produced only a few years before Tasso became known in England.

The composition of the painting in the Los Angeles County Museum is of special interest, as it is obviously the earliest version Van Dyck painted. It is even more closely related to the text by Tasso than the much larger Baltimore version:

Rinaldo, gone astray from Godfrey of Boulogne's army, comes to the banks of the Orontes



ANTON VAN DYCK . . . Lost drawing formerly in the Fairfax Murray collection

came into vogue through the translation by Edward Fairfax, published in 1600. It was more than a translation, it was a poem in the best Elizabethan style, following that of Spenser's *Fairie Queen*. Elizabeth, to whom Fairfax dedicated the work, was enchanted with it. James I is said to have "valued it above all English

river, where he sees a marble pillar with an inscription inviting him to visit the island nearby. The inscription describes the island as the most strange and beautiful in the world. Rinaldo takes a small boat and rows over the narrow cog which separates him from the island.

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He finds nothing superlative, only beautiful trees and flowers, and being weary, he throws down arms and helmet, to rest in the meadow. Half-asleep, he becomes aware of the rushing sound of nearby water, and he looks up to see a singing nymph rising from the river. She extols the pleasures of youth when it follows the dictates of its desires: "Let your happy souls in joy possess, the ivory castles of your bodies fair." Sung thus to sleep, Rinaldo is discovered by Armida, Satan's instrument against the crusading knights.

Hunting him in wrath, Armida finds that his beautiful, peaceful appearance, once she sees him, converts her emotion to love. Instead of killing him she cools his cheeks and forehead with her veil, then binds him with a chain of flowers and carries him off to her castle "in a coach which two old dragons drew."

This is the motif, from the XIVth book of Tasso's poem, depicted in the Baltimore painting and in the one recently discovered. The well known painting in the Louvre (G. Glück, *Klassiker der Kunst*, p. 363), usually dated in Van Dyck's later English period—despite its very Titianesque style!—refers, to my mind, to another episode described in the XVIth book of the epic. Here Rinaldo is shown lying in Armida's arms, in her garden of love. In this embrace they are found by the Knights who have penetrated Armida's castle in an effort to bring Rinaldo back to his senses, and in this they finally succeed. The verses describe Armida, her tresses unbound, gazing into her mirror, while Rinaldo rests upon her bosom. Nothing of the mirror, so conspicuous in the Louvre painting, or the beautiful jewels with which the cupids play, is mentioned in the earlier episode of the poem. On the other hand, unlike the other paintings, the Louvre work does not show Armida's surprise, her flowing veils, or

the flower garland with which she encircles Rinaldo.

Van Dyck followed Tasso carefully. In the Los Angeles version he added (on the left side) the marble pillar standing on the mainland, a feature which does not appear in either the drawing or the Baltimore painting. He improved on the drawing by placing Rinaldo in such a position that he seems actually asleep, whereas in the drawing he could be interpreted as suddenly awakening. The connection between the lovers is beautifully expressed in the painting through the arrangement of Armida's arms, which without touching Rinaldo, encircle him with a graceful rhythm of lines. Not even in the Baltimore painting, which is otherwise so much more impressive in size, execution and color, is so strong an atmosphere of intense sentiment created.

As with many of Van Dyck's works executed in Italy or soon thereafter, the Los Angeles painting has suffered somewhat from the dark bolus ground employed as underpaint. The figure of the nymph shows clearly the influence of Titian, the master who impressed the Fleming most in Italy. The painting can be dated a year or two prior to the Baltimore composition, about 1627. The cupid with the reversed torch, in the middle foreground, appears in a similar pose in the large composition of the Crucifixion in the Antwerp Museum, dated 1629, and in almost the same movement again, in the great Palermo altarpiece (destroyed in the War) which was begun in 1624 and finished in Genoa, probably in 1628.

The painting is exhibited in the large Reception Hall, opposite another of Van Dyck's works, the recently acquired full-length portrait of the Duchess of Richmond, which was described in our last *Bulletin of the Art Division*.*

—W. R. VALENTINER

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